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FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6794
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0601
RUEPGDA/USEUCOM JIC VAHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000391

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/15/2016
TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP # 26

REF: LAGOS 387

Classified By: Acting Political/Economic Chief Shannon Ross
for reasons 1.4 (D/E).

Hostage Welfare Update

¶1. (C) Shell sources, including NGO lead Judy Asuni, reiterated earlier messages of the militants' distrust of Delta State Governor Ibori, and the disagreement among the militants about releasing the remaining three hostages, with some willing to release now and others arguing against their release because of the GON's failure to deliver on promises of no reprisals made to gain release of the hostages in January. Shell also said an associate of Asuni's took additional letters from the hostages' families into the creeks this morning.

¶2. (C) CNN's interview of Macon Hawkins was aired at 1830 local time. Hawkins described the good treatment given to the hostages while he was in captivity and his belief that his release was due to his age and medical condition. Hawkins appealed for the release of the other hostages now that "...the word is out all over the world..." about conditions in the Delta.

¶3. (C) Willbros reports AmCit hostage Cody Oswalt's family is frustrated with the lack of progress and was considering going directly to the press. Willbros and FBI representatives have contacted the Oswalts and believe they will hold off on any press contact for now. Willbros reports that Macon Hawkins has also been in contact with the Oswalts. Shell US representatives visited the Oswalt and Spell families.

Hostage Negotiations

¶4. (C) The British Deputy High Commission reported the hostage situation will be addressed in another "Cobra" ministerial-level meeting in London.

Energy Update

¶5. (C) Oil industry sources relayed threats of additional kidnappings of expatriates beginning Monday. Our warden and other expatriate sources in Warri downplayed the threat within the city to FEST officer James Webster, saying the danger was limited to those in the creeks or at remote facilities.

Military Update

¶6. (C) DAO reports military activity is unusually quiet.

Media Update

¶7. (SBU) Dailies reported the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) denies the hostages' release is imminent, saying the hostages will only be released when their demands are met. MEND also threatened additional attacks and warned foreign workers to leave the region. Reuters reported an additional MEND threat to the airstrips in Delta and Edo States they claim were used to launch military attacks that precipitated the current crisis, saying "We wish to remind the air force...that a surprise visit will be paid to the airport."

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Consular Update

¶8. (C) There have been no reports of additional attacks on AmCits. One mission Conoff and one FEST member are in Warri monitoring negotiations and prepared to assist with repatriation. The UK also has a consular officer in Warri to monitor negotiations and assist with repatriation. The head of Shell Security is on standby for repatriation assistance.
HOWE